

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

MARVEL COMICS GROUPTM



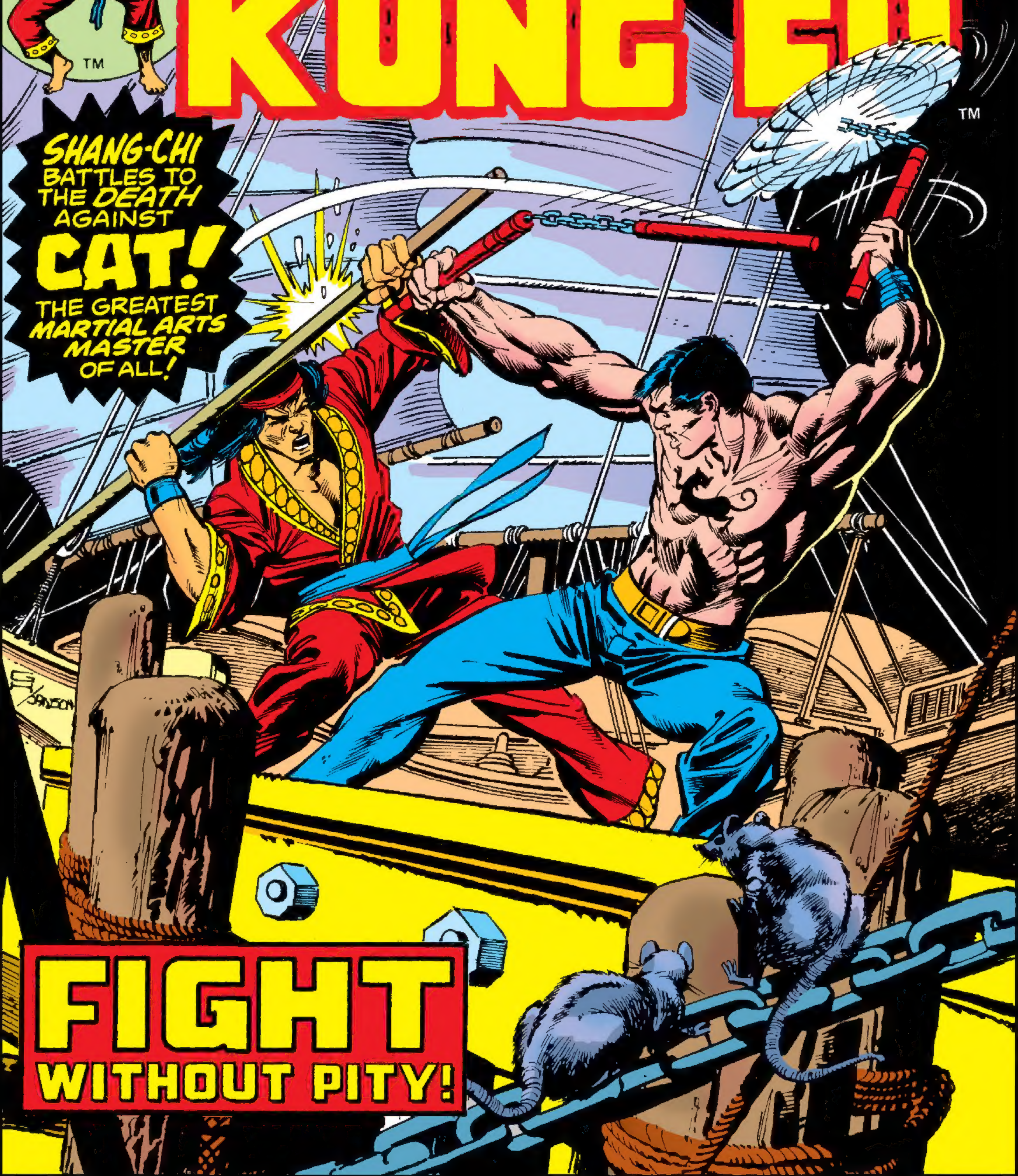
39
APR
02449

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI,

MASTER OF KUNG FU



SHANG-CHI
BATTLES TO
THE DEATH
AGAINST
CAT!
THE GREATEST
MARTIAL ARTS
MASTER
OF ALL!



**FIGHT
WITHOUT PITY!**

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

MASTER OF KUNG FU!

TM JV 203

"HONG KONG: A VOICE, ECHOING FROM NOWHERE, FILLS MY MIND: 'THE NIGHTS HERE IN CHINA ARE NO LONGER BEWITCHED, SHANG-CHI, BUT THE BEWITCHERS OF THE NIGHT NEVER EXISTED IN LONDON. AT LEAST HERE THEIR GHOSTS LINGER, SOFTLY SIGHING IN THE EVENING BREEZE...'"

"THE VOICE BELONGS TO JULIETTE, SHE WHO IS NAYLAND SMITH'S AGENT, SHE WHO PRETENDS TO SING IN THE JADE PEACOCK, AND SHE WHOSE SADNESS IS HER SONG. I HAVE COME HERE TO PROTECT HER FROM THE MAN SHE LOVES, THE MAN CALLED CAT."

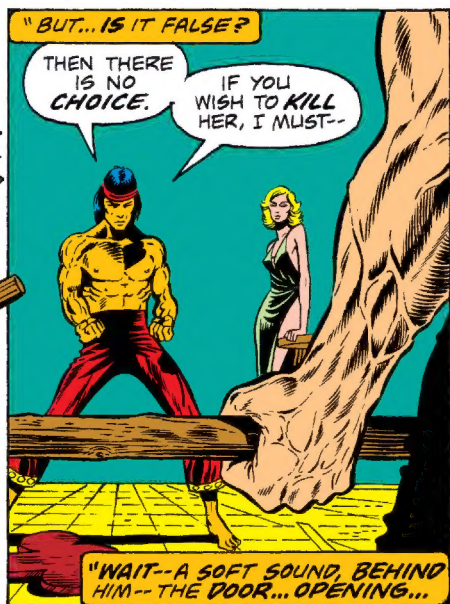
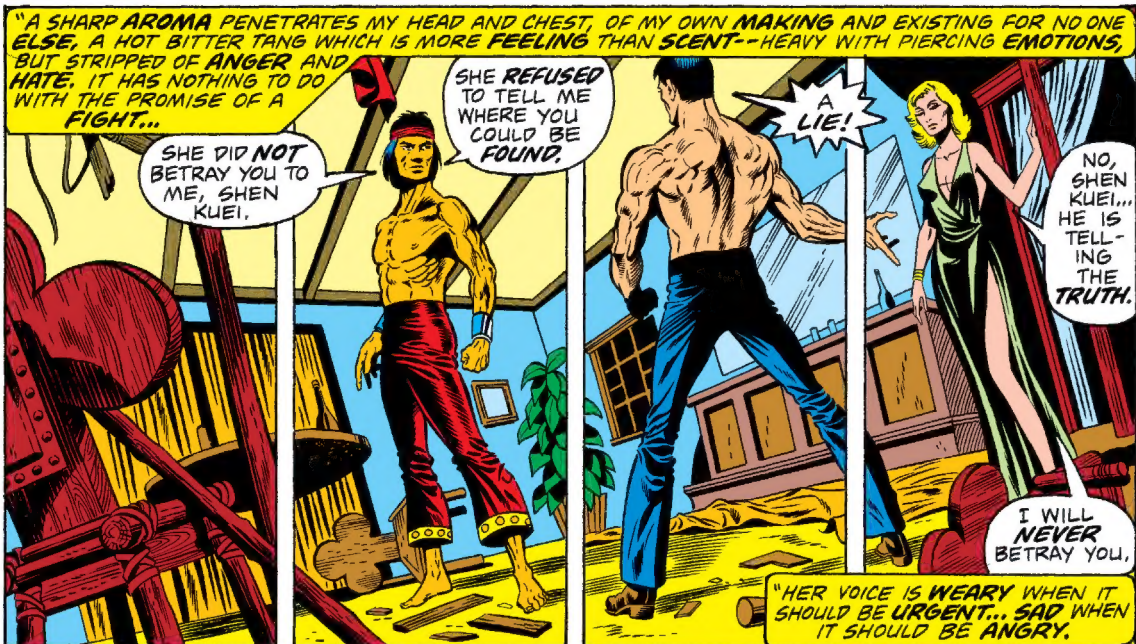
"A CAT WALKS
BESIDE ME..."



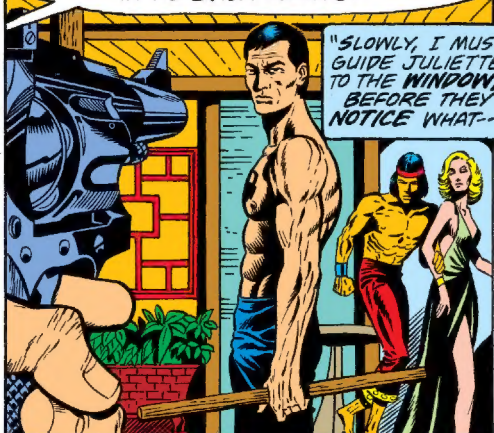
DOUG MOENCH: WRITER/CO-PLOT
PAUL GULACY: ARTIST/CO-PLOT

DAN ADKINS, INKER
A. KAWECKI, LETTERER
G. ROUSSOS, COLORIST
M. WOLFMAN, EDITOR

FIGHT WITHOUT PITY

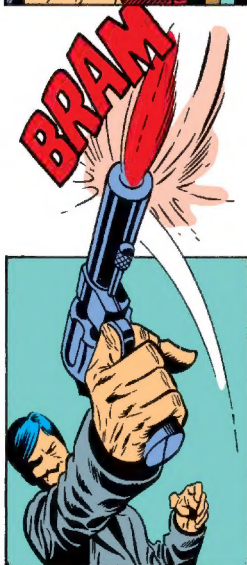
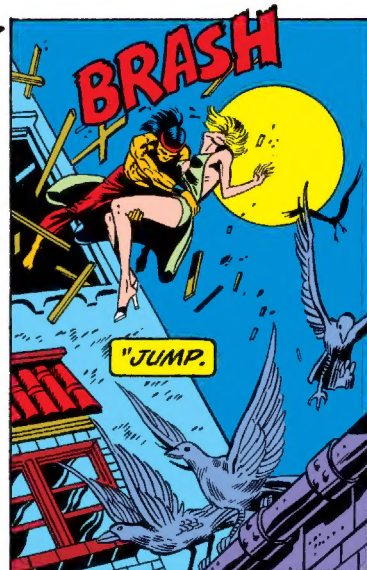
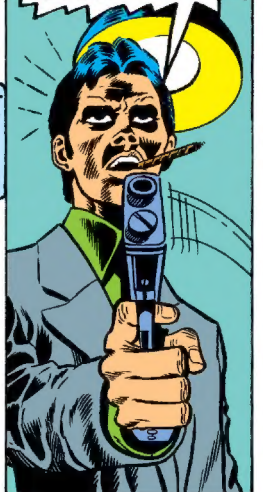


SO...WHILE WE DO NOT INTEND TO KILL YOU, WE **MUST** CAUTION YOU AGAINST FUTURE OCCURRENCES OF THIS **NATURE**. YOU SEE, YOUR FIGHTING MIGHT ATTRACT **ATTENTION** TO THE JADE PEACOCK--AND WHAT GOES ON IN ITS **BACK ROOMS**.



"SLOWLY, I MUST GUIDE JULIETTE TO THE WINDOW, BEFORE THEY NOTICE WHAT--"

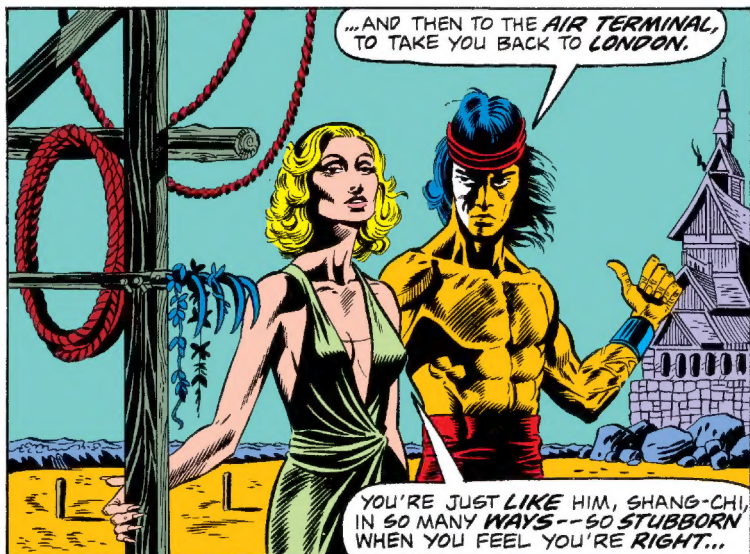
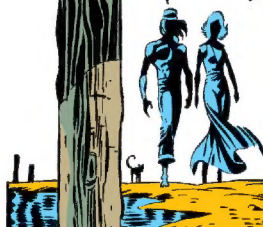
HEY!! THEY'RE GOING TO--



"WE HAVE LEFT THE JADE PEACOCK FAR BEHIND, IN SHADOWS AND ALLEYS..."

WHERE WILL YOU GO NOW, SHANG-CHI?

TO THE LOCATION YOU HAVE GIVEN ME-- TO GET THE DOCUMENTS...



...AND THEN TO THE AIR TERMINAL, TO TAKE YOU BACK TO LONDON.

YOU'RE JUST LIKE HIM, SHANG-CHI, IN SO MANY WAYS--SO STUBBORN WHEN YOU FEEL YOU'RE RIGHT...

BUT I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU--I DON'T WANT TO RETURN TO LONDON. HAVEN'T I MADE THAT CLEAR YET?

I LOVE SHEN KUEI-- AND I WON'T LEAVE HIM.

HE WILL KILL YOU IF YOU DON'T.

NO...HE WON'T KILL ME, YOU DON'T KNOW HIM AS I DO--YOU KNOW ONLY HIS TEMPER.

BUT HE'LL CALM DOWN...ONCE HE'S CONVINCED THAT I DIDN'T BETRAY HIM TO YOU.

I CANNOT FORCE YOU TO COME WITH ME. IF IT IS YOUR WISH TO STAY, THEN IT IS NOT MY PLACE TO INTERFERE WITH THAT WISH...

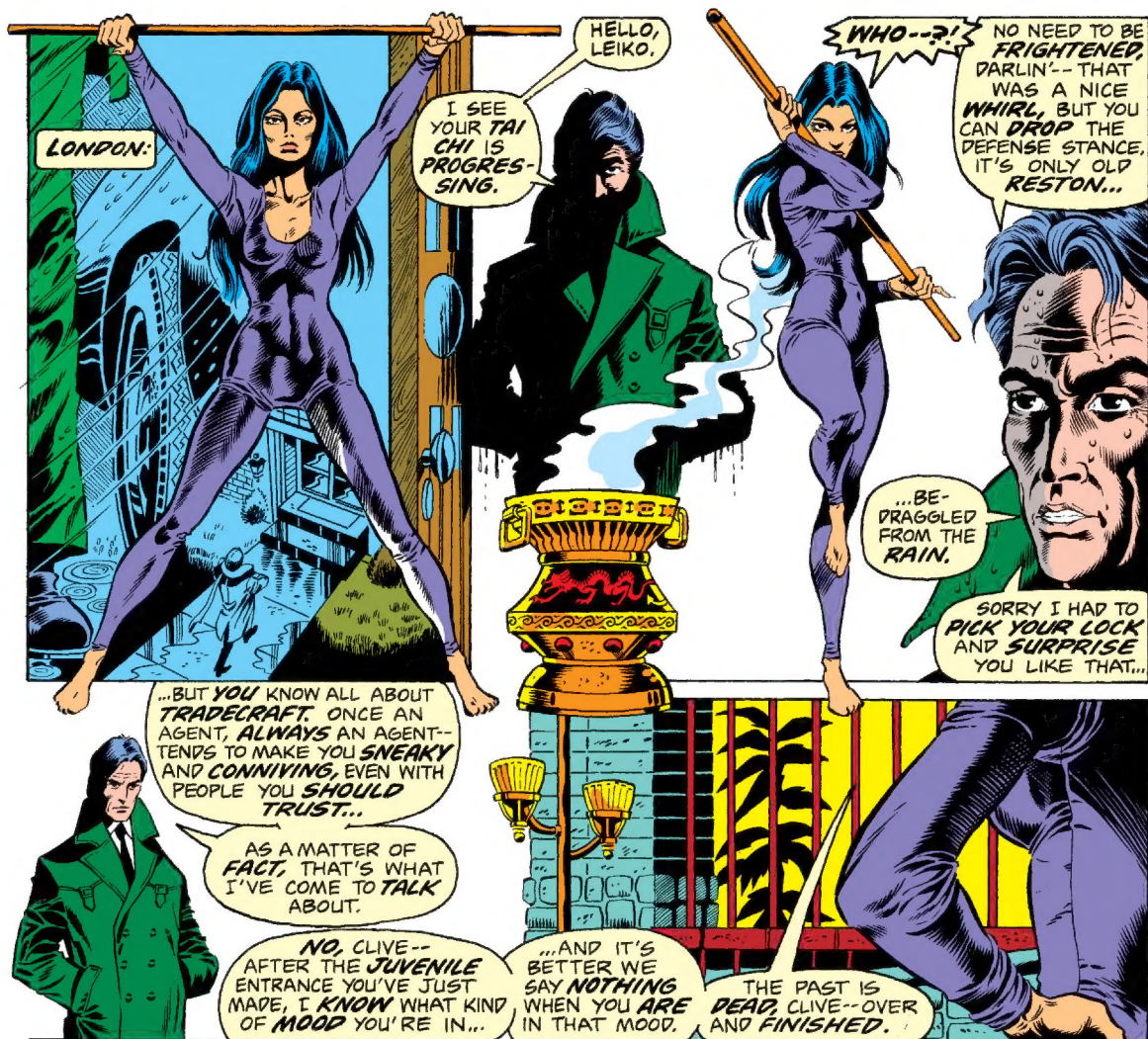
FAREWELL.

"FOR LONG MOMENTS, I FEEL HER EYES ON MY BACK AS I WALK AWAY. THEN..."

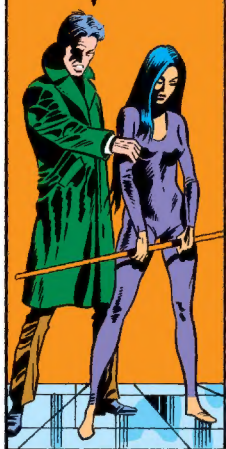
WAIT, SHANG-CHI... PERHAPS THAT SIAMESE CAT HAS THE RIGHT IDEA...

PERHAPS I SHOULD STAY WITH YOU...AT LEAST UNTIL I CAN THINK OF A WAY TO CONVINCE SHEN KUEI...

"SHE JOINS ME."



DON'T GIVE ME *THAT* ROUTINE, LEIKO! AS A *WOMAN*, YOU LEFT MORE THAN A *LITTLE* TO BE--



ALL RIGHT, DARLIN'! IF *THAT'S* THE WAY YOU WANT IT, WE'VE HURT EACH OTHER A *LOT* IN THE PAST...



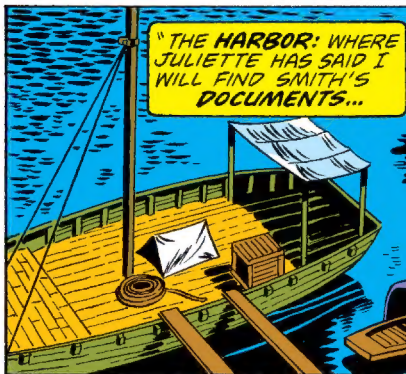
MAYBE THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO *NOW*...



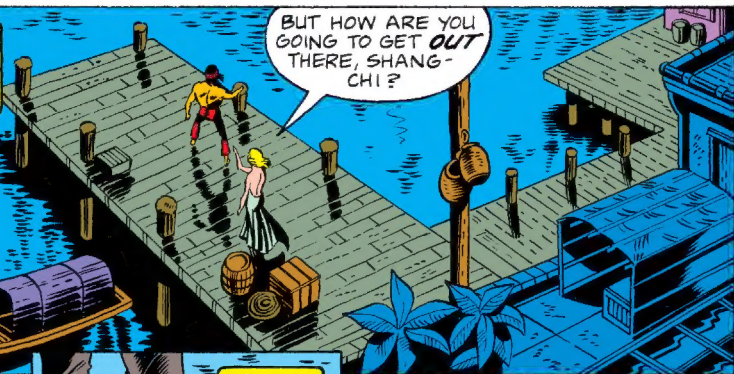
CLIVE...

I...

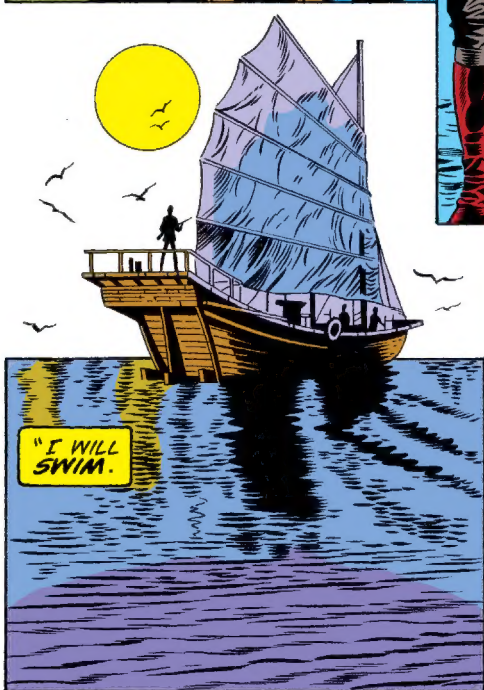
I...



"THE HARBOR: WHERE JULIETTE HAS SAID I WILL FIND SMITH'S DOCUMENTS..."



BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET *OUT* THERE, SHANG-CHI?



"I WILL SWIM."



"THE GUARD."



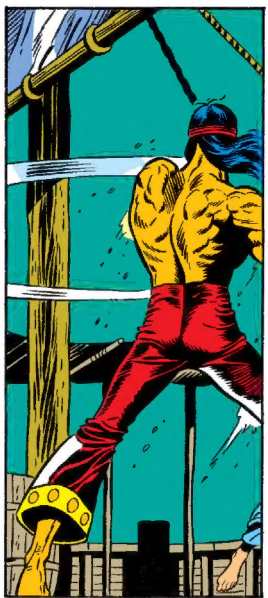
YAAH!!--!!

"I WILL NEED HIS RIFLE."



"TWO MORE OF THEM..."

STOP HIM!



"ONE."



FRAKT



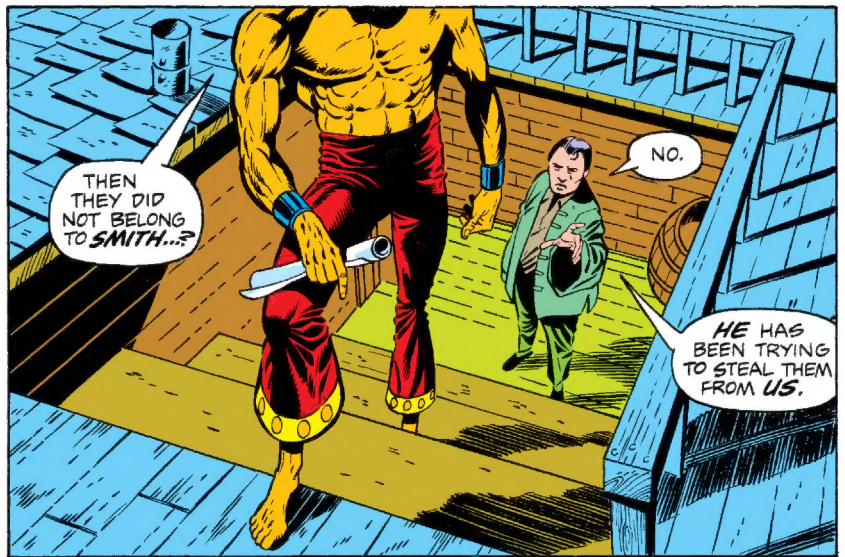
"NOW, TO THE CABIN..."



you.

I HAVE COME FOR SMITH'S DOCUMENTS.



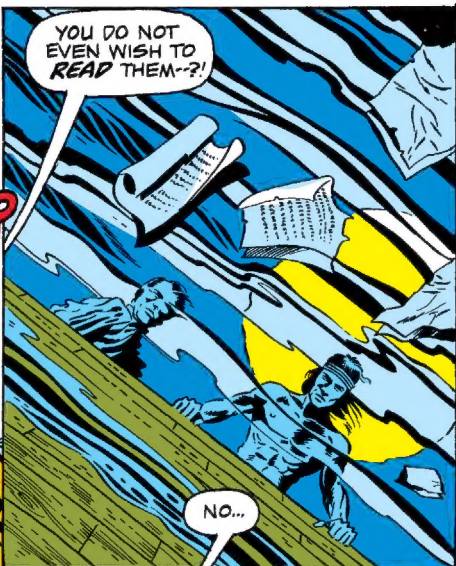




I...

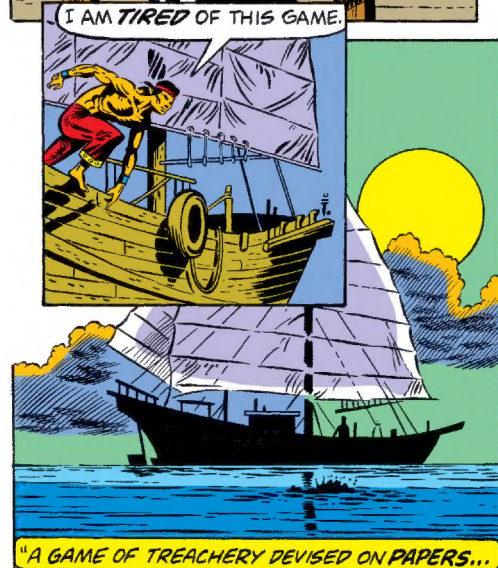


...SEE.



YOU DO NOT EVEN WISH TO READ THEM--?

NO...



I AM TIRED OF THIS GAME.



"PAPERS WHICH ARE TRADED FROM ONE COUNTRY TO THE NEXT..."



"PAPERS WHICH GOVERN LIFE, AND DICTATE WHOM TO KILL..."



"PAPERS WRITTEN TO SPILL BLOOD, AND WITHOUT ANY OTHER WORTH."

Fu Manchu has been in Hong Kong for some time but seems to be planning a master plan. He is the only one who can do it.



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SHANG-CHI?

DID YOU GET THE PAPERS--?

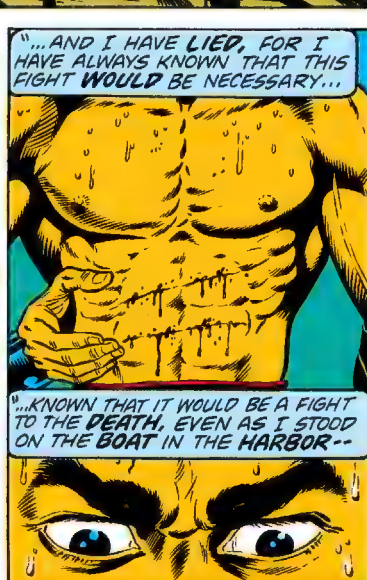
NO.

THEY WERE NOT MINE TO TAKE.

NOT YOURS TO TAKE--? WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

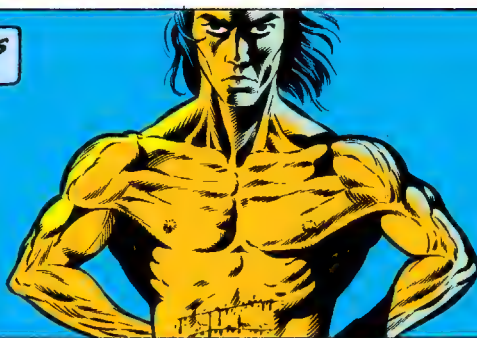
"THE CAT HAS NOT LEFT ME."

"HE WALKS AT MY BACK--"



"--AND GAZED AT THE RACKS
ON THE CABIN WALL..."

"... FILLED WITH
WEAPONS."



SHA-
KAK!

SHA
KAK!

SHAK

SHAK

LAK
LAK
LAK

LAK
LAK
LAK

LAK

LAK
LAK
LAK
LAK

LAK

LAK
LAK
LAK
LAK

LAK

LAK

TEPT

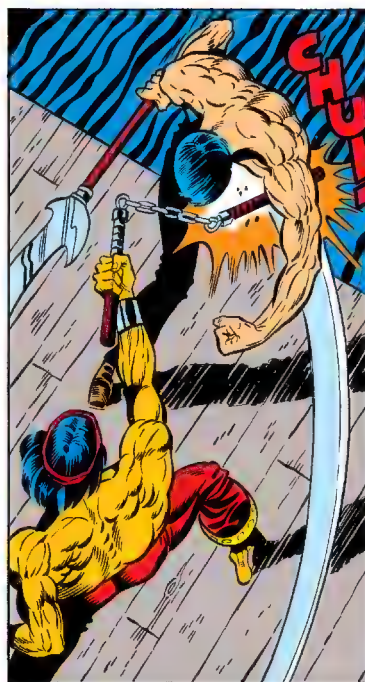
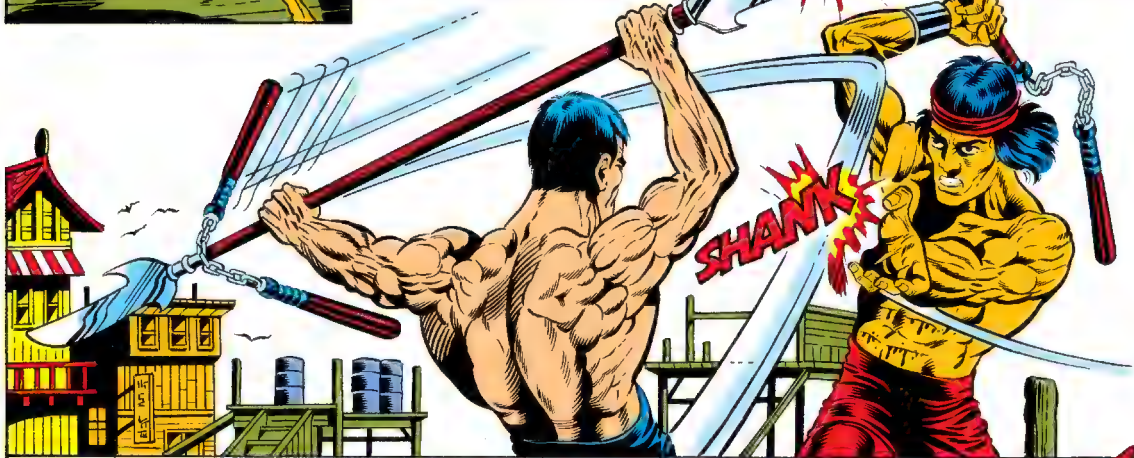
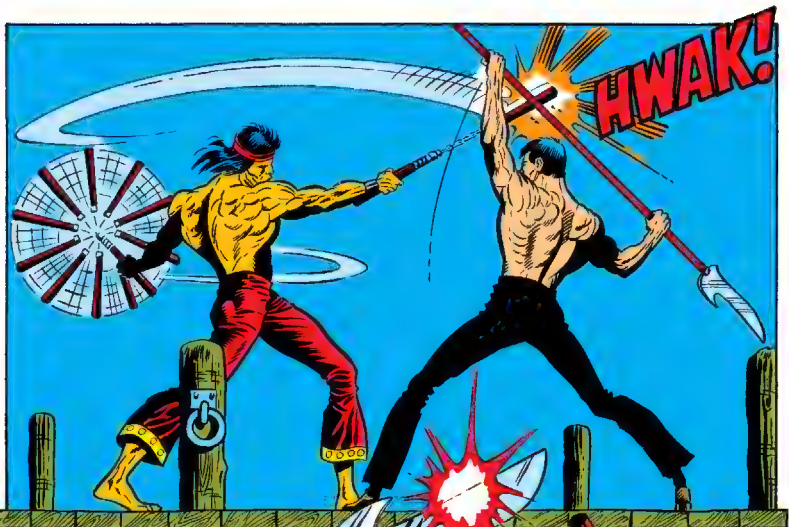
TUP

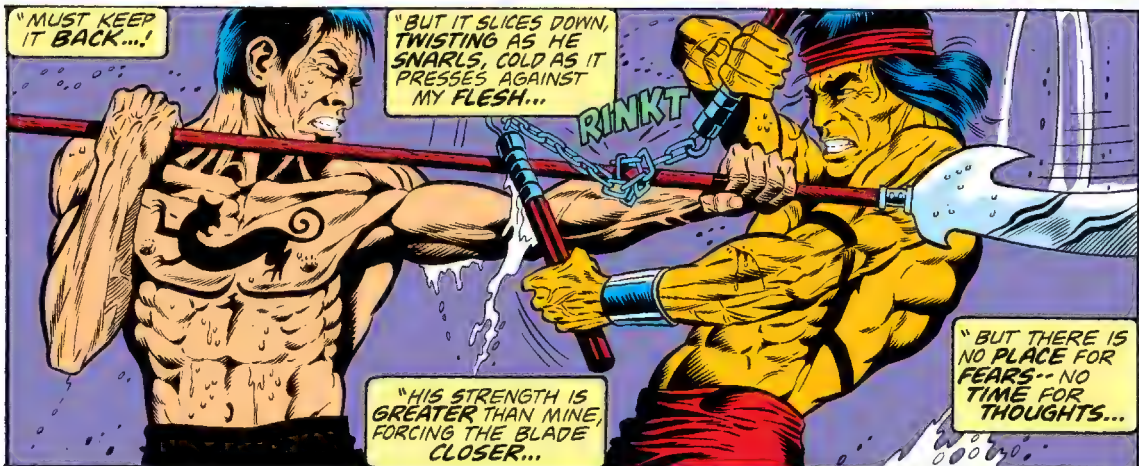
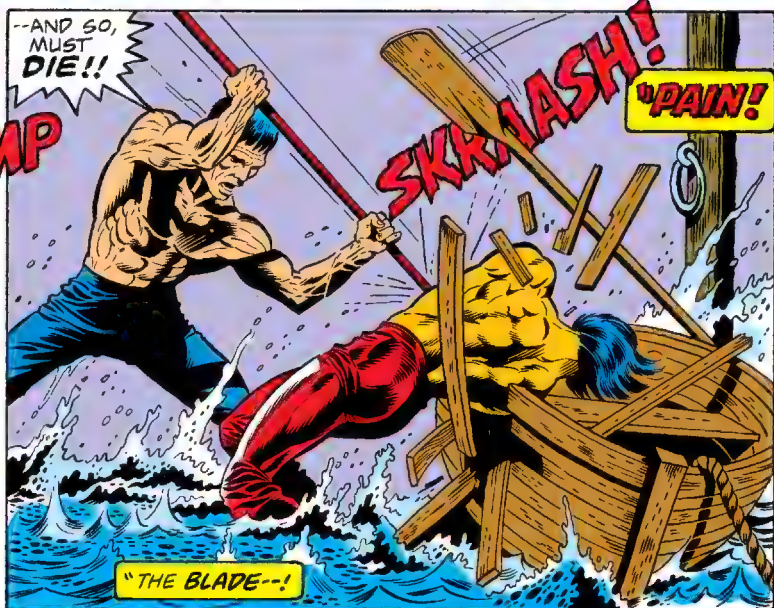
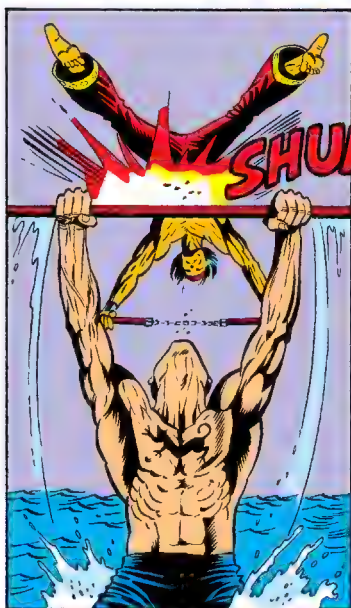
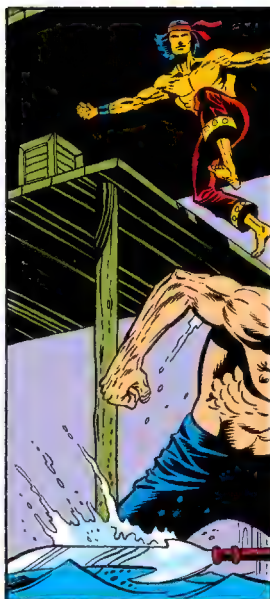
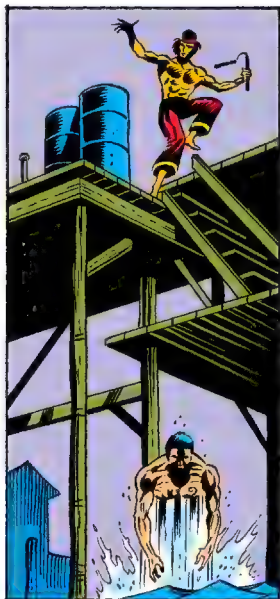
LAK

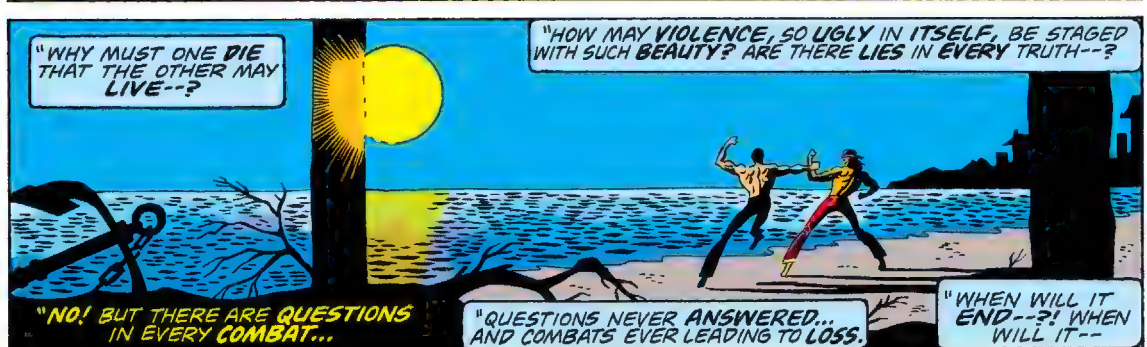
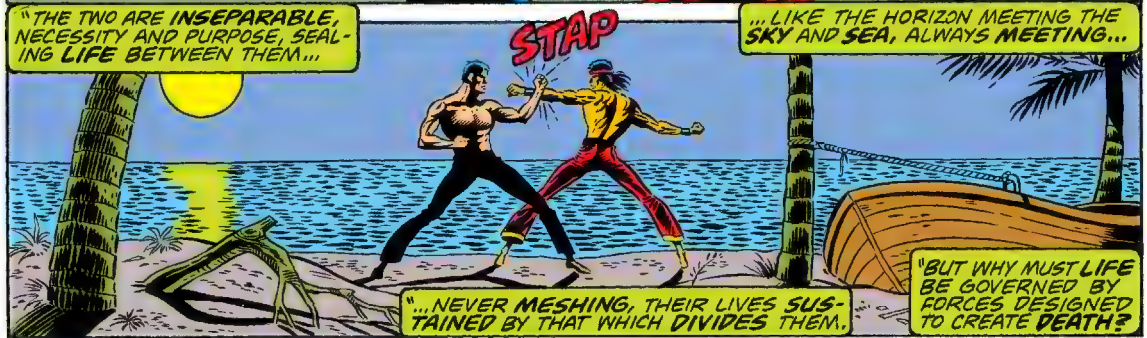
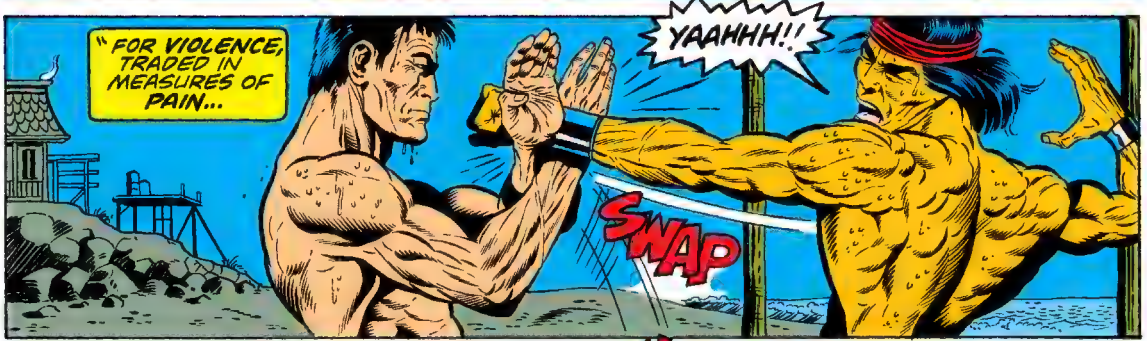
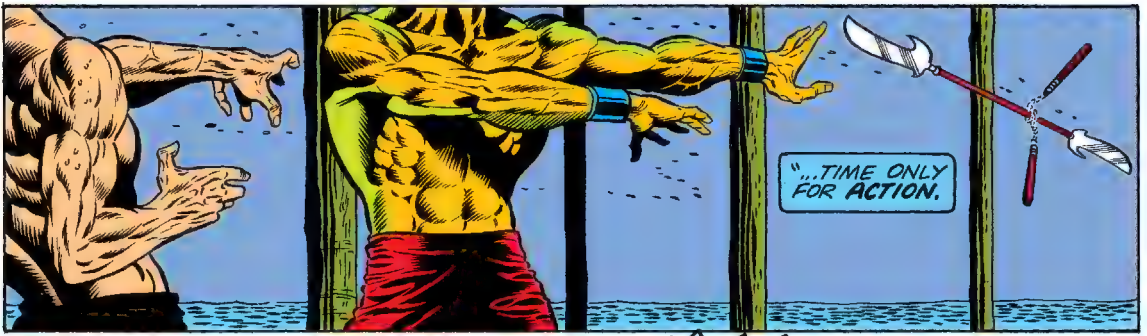
LAK

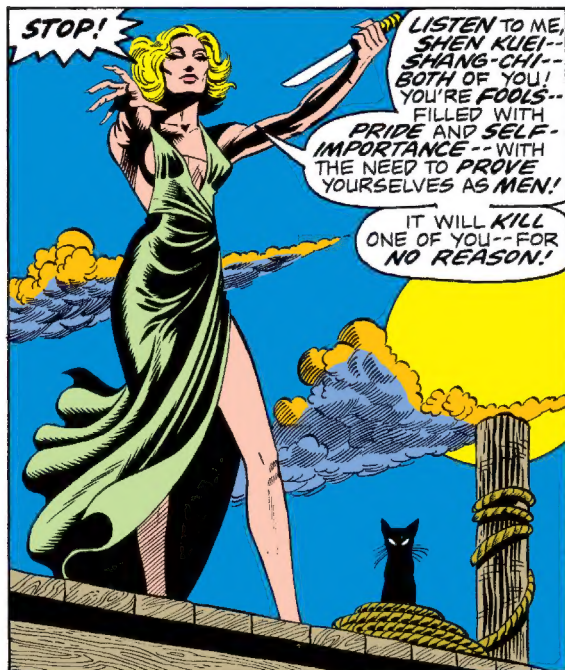
YOU HAVE
BROUGHT
THE FIGHT
TO ME,
CAT...











STOP!

LISTEN TO ME, SHEN KUEI-- SHANG-CHI-- BOTH OF YOU! YOU'RE FOOLS-- FILLED WITH PRIDE AND SELF-IMPORTANCE-- WITH THE NEED TO PROVE YOURSELVES AS MEN!

IT WILL KILL ONE OF YOU--FOR NO REASON!



I CAN'T LET IT GO ON--!

I MUST STOP IT--EVEN IF I MUST DIE TO STOP IT! EVEN IF I HAVE TO PLUNGE THIS KNIFE INTO MY HEART--WITH MY OWN HAND--I'LL DO IT!

SHANG-CHI--YOU KNOW THERE'S NO REAL REASON FOR THIS FIGHT! I TELL YOU NOW THAT SHEN KUEI NO LONGER EVEN WORKS FOR THE RED CHINESE!

BELIEVE ME AND YOU'LL KNOW THERE'S NO REASON AT ALL!

"BUT THAT WAS NEVER MY REASON FOR--"



AND YOU, SHEN KUEI, I TELL YOU AGAIN THAT SHANG-CHI WAS NOT SENT TO KILL YOU! IF YOU CAN'T BELIEVE THAT, THEN BELIEVE IN MY LOVE FOR YOU--!

BELIEVE ME AND STOP THE FIGHT, SHEN KUEI--TELL ME TO LAY DOWN THE KNIFE...

BELIEVE IN MY LOVE--OR WITNESS MY DEATH...!

"STILL HE HESITATES..."

"...UNCERTAIN..."

"...FILLED WITH DOUBTS--DOUBTS WHICH STRUGGLE AGAINST HIS DESIRE TO TRUST HER..."

"BUT WHEN WILL HE DECIDE--? HOW LONG WILL HE PERMIT THE KNIFE TO WAVER OVER HER HEART--?"



"I FEEL THE NEED TO GRASP HIM--SHAKE HIM IN ANGER--FORCE HIM TO--"



"NO!!!"

"SHE PLUNGES THE KNIFE INWARD--TO HER HEART--?!"



"NO--MERELY HER SHOULDER. SHEN KUEI RUSHES FORWARD, GRASPS HER AS HER LEGS LOSE THEIR STRENGTH..."

FORGIVE ME JULIETTE--I BELIEVE YOU...

I... LOVE... YOU...

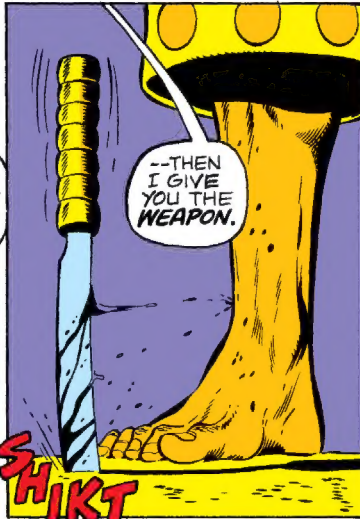


AND YOU, SHANG-CHI--BRITISHER... PERHAPS YOU HAVE NOT CAUSED THIS--

PERHAPS I HAVE,

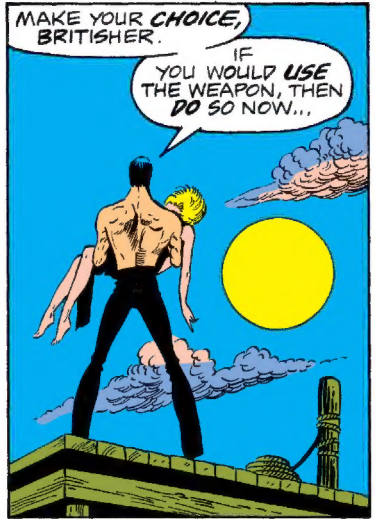


BUT IF YOU **HAVE** BEEN SENT TO SLAY ME--



--THEN I GIVE YOU THE WEAPON.

SHIKT



MAKE YOUR **CHOICE**, BRITISHER.

IF YOU WOULD **USE** THE WEAPON, THEN **DO** SO NOW...



I OFFER MY **BACK** TO YOU...



BUT I HAVE MADE...**MY** CHOICE.

"AS THEY PASS, SHE... LOOKS AT ME..."

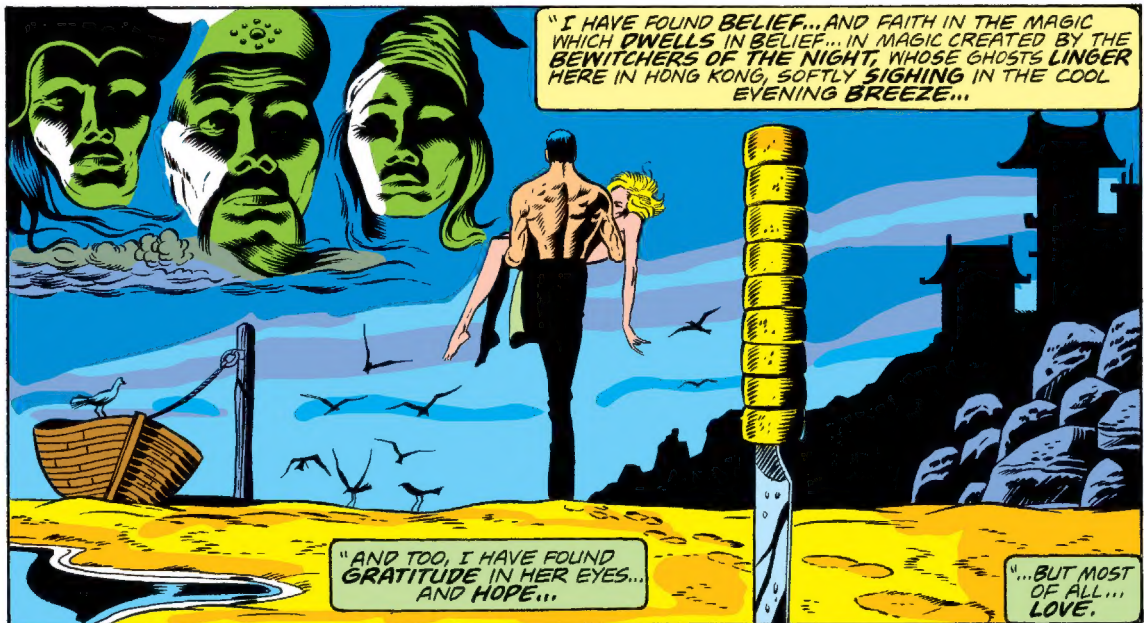


"...KNOWING THAT I HAVE BEEN SENT TO HONG KONG TO FIND--



"--A CAT.

"BUT IN JULIETTE'S EYES I HAVE FOUND MUCH MORE..."



"I HAVE FOUND BELIEF... AND FAITH IN THE MAGIC WHICH DWELLS IN BELIEF... IN MAGIC CREATED BY THE BEWITCHERS OF THE NIGHT, WHOSE GHOSTS LINGER HERE IN HONG KONG, SOFTLY **SIGHING** IN THE COOL EVENING BREEZE..."

"AND TOO, I HAVE FOUND GRATITUDE IN HER EYES... AND HOPE..."

"...BUT MOST OF ALL... LOVE."

"HONG KONG AIRPORT: MY MIND DWELLS ON THE FIGHT, AND ON ITS LACK OF HATE OR PITY... RETRACING EACH OF MY MOVES AND HIS... RECALLING THE SOUND AND FEEL OF FIST MEETING FLESH, HIS AND MINE..."

"THERE IS ONLY ONE THOUGHT I MAY REACH: THE FIGHT WAS UNNECESSARY, AND MEANINGLESS..."



"I WOULD HAVE LOST."

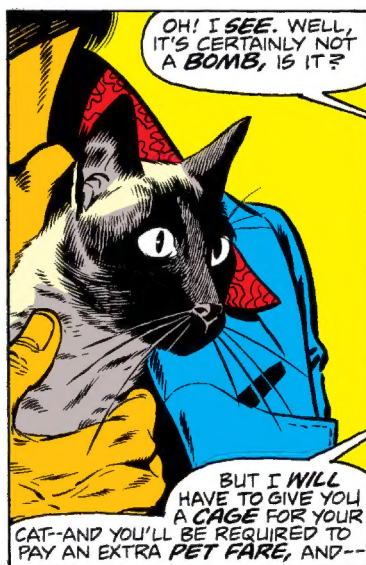


WELCOME ABOARD FLIGHT 907, SIR. WE WILL BE DEPARTING FOR LONDON IN--



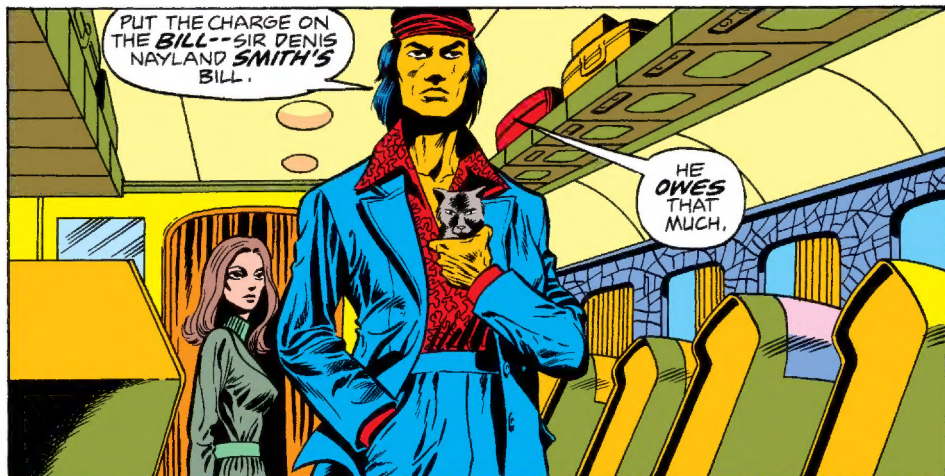
UH, I'M AFRAID I MUST ASK YOU TO REMOVE YOUR JACKET FOR INSPECTION, SIR.

THAT BULGE...



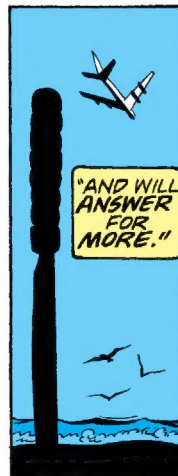
OH! I SEE. WELL, IT'S CERTAINLY NOT A BOMB, IS IT?

BUT I WILL HAVE TO GIVE YOU A CAGE FOR YOUR CAT--AND YOU'LL BE REQUIRED TO PAY AN EXTRA PET FARE, AND--



PUT THE CHARGE ON THE BILL--SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH'S BILL.

HE OWES THAT MUCH.



"AND WILL ANSWER FOR MORE."

NEXT ISSUE:

A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN SHANG-CHI AND SMITH! LEIKO'S OMINOUS DEATH MISSION! THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW CHARACTER DROWNING IN LOST COURAGE AND GIN! AND THE USUAL MARTIAL ARTS MOOD AND ACTION, ALL IN THE STORY CALLED--

THE MURDER AGENCY!

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

56 MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Doug:

I have great feelings about Shang-Chi's new role, from the Bond-like adventures to his new outfit to Leiko. I immensely enjoy reading lively action and strong characterization without the old stereotypes like father Fu still lurking beyond the latticework. The "new series" is thoroughly enjoyable so far in all respects. (However, I was a little surprised to see Leiko Wu with red hair in # 34...another half-Asian, half-Caucasian? Or did Mordillo supply a hairdresser?)

One heavier point: I think it's well established that Black Jack is a good guy, a professional agent, and an ally of Shang-Chi. While his use of the term "Chinaman" may be more out of orneriness than hostility, I find it unlikely that Shang-Chi would give him tacit toleration indefinitely. In addition, to the extent that any media figure can be a role model for younger readers, it's not advisable that people pick up this particular habit practiced by Black Jack. Not every recipient has Shang-Chi's training in patience.

Cheers,

Bill Wu
316 E. Madison #15
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Good to hear from you again, Bill.

No; Leiko (whose last name is also Wu, by the way) is not another product of "miscegenation," nor did Mordillo forcibly dunk her head in a vat of Clairol. In fact, no one was more surprised than Doug (can't shake that ole third-person) to see his new character's hair colored so blatantly wrong — especially since the very same colorist had correctly colored Leiko's hair black in the previous issue. The mix-up still hasn't been entirely explained (as few things are in the hallowed halls of Marvel Madness), but the situation has been rectified with #35 onward.

As for Black Jack's proclivity for the use of the term "Chinaman," I'm afraid this is where we differ, Bill. As we see it, Black Jack uses the term as a form of reverse-affection. The big lug is too stubborn and cantankerous and embarrassed to concede that he actually likes — and respects — Shang-Chi. He'd probably give his life for Chi, but we doubt that he'll ever use Chi's proper name.

And over on Shang-Chi's side of the looking glass, we don't think it's a matter of tolerance or patience. Assuming Chi even realizes that "Chinaman" is often intended as a slur (after all, what's in a name? and "Chinaman" snarled by a bad guy carries a completely different connotation than "Chinaman" spoken by a grinning Black Jack Tarr), we have a hunch our Master of the Martial Arts is sort of above taking insult from something which is rather insignificant in its proper perspective. Remember, Shang-Chi is portrayed as being more "noble" and "philosophical" than the average person — someone who is able to grasp the heart of a matter without being swayed by a superficial facade. In fact, Doug has always meant to infer that Shang-Chi *humors* Black Jack's somewhat obnoxious idiosyncracies.

But we must admit, Bill, that your last point — that of Black Jack serving as a model for younger readers — has given us pause for thought. We've assumed that most — if not all — readers were astute enough to grasp that which we've explained above. If not, we'll change...but let us know, people; every vote counts, and in matters like this it doesn't take many votes to sway us...

Dear Doug and Paul,

You know how I can go on and on about an artist when I adore his work. Well, this time (MOKF #34), I'll just say that Paul Gulacy turned in another classic in his long line of the same.

However (and you thought you were off the hook, didn't ya?), I *will* go on about the story, something I seldom do. Doug Moench seems to be constantly trying to prove that he's the best writer at Marvel — and he's constantly succeeding!! "Cyclone at the Center of a Madman's Crown" was extremely exciting from page one to the end. I especially loved all the little things that were running around Mordillo's island — things like the talking train and Brynocki which spiced the story up considerably, adding a bit of humor to an otherwise chilling tale. Doug seems to have an amazing knack for portraying the inside of a madman's mind. Where were you before comics, Doug?

A last note: I hope you keep Shang-Chi's new, skin-tight "gi," as I (and I suspect many other Marvelites) like it tremendously.

Ken Meyer, Jr.
3110B Revere Circle
Hill AFB, Utah 84406

Doug wasn't even *born* before comics, Ken. They started somewhere around 1938 or 1939, and he didn't start until his mother lost some nine pounds on February 23, 1948.

But seriously, Doug was in his own private looney-bin of the mind prior to beginning his career as a comics writer — busily and hetically pounding out men's magazine fiction, Sunday supplement newspaper feature-articles, and even two novels (one of which was sold but never published: the publisher went bankrupt). Then, at the ripe old age of twenty-two (ripe, at least, to spring-chicken Gerry Conway), Doug turned to comics and made his insanity public.

As for Shang-Chi's erstwhile superheroish-jump suit "gi," we're afraid it's a thing of the past — at least for the foreseeable future. Both Doug and Paul have received orders from Up-Front: Get Shang-Chi back in his pajamas and keep him there! So, unless enough of a clamor to the contrary is raised, there the matter — and Shang-Chi's bod — rests.

Dear Paul & Doug,

I'm growing tired of trying to write a letter which adequately praises MASTER OF KUNG FU. My wastepaper basket is filled to the brim with crumpled wads which failed to express my appreciation for the beautiful job you two are doing. If you don't start making some mistakes, I'll start thinking you aren't human. You *are* humans, aren't you?

Wayne Vincenzi
24 Fredric St.
Wauwauet, NY 10954

Dear Wayne: Yeah.

MARVEL VALUE STAMP

